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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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09/849,857

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Hideki Itaya

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7590 09/03/2008  
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EXAMINER

LUDLOW, JAN M

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

1797

MAIL DATE

DELIVERY MODE

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PAPER

**Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.**

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

<b>Office Action Summary</b>	<b>Application No.</b> 09/849,857	<b>Applicant(s)</b> ITAYA ET AL.	
	<b>Examiner</b> Jan M. Ludlow	<b>Art Unit</b> 1797	

**-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --**

**Period for Reply**

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

**Status**

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 19 May 2008.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**.                      2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

**Disposition of Claims**

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-21 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 2 and 19-21 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1 and 3-18 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

**Application Papers**

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 1/18/2005 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

**Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119**

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All    b) ☐ Some \*    c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

**Attachment(s)**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)                     | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)           |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____                                      |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)          | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____  | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                          |

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1. Claims 8, 15 are objected to because of the following informalities: In claim 15, line 1, “A instrument having overlapping carousel instrument” is informal as to grammatical construction. In claim 8, line 3, “the sample tube” lacks clear antecedence because a plurality of sample tubes has been recited—does applicant intend “each sample tube”? In claim 8, line 6, “each sample tube capable of storing liquid sample to be analyzed” is redundant with lines 3-4. Does applicant intend “each pipette capable...”? Appropriate correction is required.

2. Claims 1, 3-18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Throughout the claims, it is unclear what is encompassed by the term “carousel” because in claims 13 and 15, the term “rotatable” is used in conjunction with carousel, whereas a carousel is by definition rotatable (see paragraph 9 of the Office Action mailed July 13, 2004)—does applicant intend to encompass stationary tables by the broad recitation of carousel? For purposes of examination, “carousel” has been interpreted as having its common meaning, i.e., “a rotatable circular device.”

Throughout the claims, “diagnostic carousel” is unclear because it is not clear what structure differentiates a “diagnostic carousel” from any other carousel.

3. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

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(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

5. The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

6. This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

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7. Claims 1, 3-5, 10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Ammann (US 20020098117A1).

Ammann teaches sample carousel 250 holding tubes 320. A second carousel (instant diagnostic carousel) 350 holding pipette tips is above and offset (having a different central axis) from carousel 250 (Figures 5-6, [0107-0108 and elsewhere]). In that the instant pipettes are tubes connectable to an aspiration device, the pipette tips of Ammann are seen to read on the instant pipettes because they too are tubes connectable to an aspiration device. A pipette (tip) is secured to a transfer mechanism 450 coupled to a syringe pump for transferring sample directly from tube 320 into the pipette (tip) when the tip is lowered into the tube, and the transfer mechanism is moveable in XYZ directions by stepper motors, constituting the instant rotary elevators (i.e., the device elevates, and at least some part of a stepper motor rotates) [0110-0112, 0116 and elsewhere]. The very end of the pipette (tip) of Ammann constitutes the instant "tip" through which sample is transferred.

8. Claims 6-7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ammann as applied to claims above.

9. Ammann fails to teach the number of tubes.

10. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to provide any number of sample tubes in order to process a desired plurality of samples in a table of desired compact size. It would have been further obvious to provide as many pipette (tips) as sample tubes in order to use a different tip for each sample to prevent cross-contamination [0116].

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11. Claims 15-18 would be allowable if rewritten or amended to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. 112, 2nd paragraph, set forth in this Office action.

12. Claim 8-9, 11-14 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. 112, 2nd paragraph, set forth in this Office action.

13. The following is a statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter: Ammann fails to teach or suggest unique identifying indicia on each of the sample tubes and pipettes (tips) and means for reading, matching and aligning the appropriate tube and pipette. Ammann fails to teach that the transfer mechanism operates at the zone of intersection as defined in that transfer takes place in a portion of the sample carousel that does not intersect the diagnostic carousel.

14. Applicant's arguments filed March 21, 2007, April 22, 2008 and May 19, 2008 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

15. None of the responses address the objection to claim 15, the lack of clarity "carousel" based on further limitation to a "rotatable" carousel, or the meaning of a "diagnostic" carousel. None of the responses address the rejection of claims 1, 3-7, 10 over the prior art. Claim 8 does not include all the limitations of the intervening claims 3-5. Note that there are new objections to claim 8.

16. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

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A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Jan M. Ludlow whose telephone number is (571) 272-1260. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday, 11:30 am - 8:00 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jill A. Warden can be reached on (571) 272-1267. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

Jan M. Ludlow  
Primary Examiner  
Art Unit 1797

/Jan M. Ludlow/  
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 1797